

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace paragraph [0008] with the following amended paragraph:

[0008] In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a manifold for a fuel cell system, comprising:

a manifold body;

a plurality of first ports in the manifold body, for connecting to fuel cell peripherals;

a plurality of second ports in the manifold body, for connecting to a fuel cell stack comprising a plurality of fuel cells and having inlets and outlets for connection to the second ports; and

a plurality of fluid passages within the manifold providing communication between respective ones of the first ports and respective ones of the second ports, wherein at least one first port is offset from the respective second port and is connected to said respective second port by a passage extending transversely within the manifold body, whereby, in use, the fluid passages communicate fluids between the fuel cell stack and fuel cell peripherals.

[0009] Preferably, the body comprises a plurality of layers of plates juxtaposed together, wherein each layer has a plurality of ports and a plurality of fluid passages providing communication between the respective ones of the plurality of ports of the corresponding layer, wherein complementary pairs of ports align and face one another and at least one layer forms an external layer including a plurality of ports forming at least one said first and second ports.

[0010] Advantageously, the manifold body comprises:

a first plate layer, including said plurality of first ports;

a second plate layer, including said plurality of second

ports;

a third plate layer sandwiched between the first and second plate layers including, a plurality of third ports and a plurality of fluid passages therein, with said plurality of fluid passages providing communication between said third ports and with at least one of said fluid passages extending transversely within the third plate layer, and with the third ports being aligned and in communication with respective ones of the said first and second ports.

**[0014]** In accordance with another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a fuel cell system comprising, a fuel cell stack including:

~~at least one~~ a plurality of fuel cells and having a cathode inlet and a cathode outlet for an oxide, an anode inlet and an anode outlet for a fuel gas, and a coolant inlet and a coolant outlet;

a manifold having ports connected to the cathode inlet, the cathode outlet, the anode inlet, the anode outlet, the coolant inlet, and the coolant outlet of the fuel cell stack;

a plurality of additional ports in the manifold including at least a port for an oxidant inlet, a port for a fuel gas inlet, and inlet and outlet ports for the coolant;  
and

a plurality of peripheral devices connected to the additional ports of the manifold.